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Mr. *LOWMAN's*

# Reformation-Sermon,

Preached *June* 27. 1720.

A

# SERMON

Preach'd to the

# SOCIETIES

FOR

*Reformation of Manners,*

AT

*SALTERS-HALL,*

June 27. 1720.

By MOSES LOWMAN.

*Publiſhed at their Requeſt.*

*LONDON:*

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A

# SERMON

Preach'd to the

# SOCIETIES

FOR

## Reformation of Manners,

AT

## SALTERS-HALL,

June 27. 1720.

## LUKE XX. 25.

*And he said unto them, Render therefore unto* Cesar *the things which be* Cesar's, *and unto God the things which be God's.*

THESE words of our Blessed Saviour, are one of those wise Answers he gave to the subtle and captious Questions of his Enemies; in which he shew'd that penetrating Judgment, and wary Prudence, as at once amaz'd them, and put them to silence. They were very watchful, some way or other, to ensnare him. On this occasion, they suborned Men to go to him, who should *feign themselves just Men*, Men of a very tender Regard to Conscience, and therefore seemingly desirous of a full Information in all Questions relating to it. They came, to all outward appearance, in an humble and respectful manner, but covered therewith the vilest Hypocrisy of Heart. *They asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither accepteſt thou the Person of any, but teachest the way of God truly, Ver.* 21. That is, they express'd a great Opinion of his Integrity and Impartiality, and therefore

promis'd for him, he would not fear to tell them his Judgment openly. Yet all this was with a wicked Intent, *that they might lay hold of his Words, and so deliver him to the Power and Authority of the Governor*, Ver. 20. The Question with which they propos'd to ensnare him was this, *Is it lawful for us to give Tribute unto* Cesar *or no?* Ver. 22. They well knew there were many among the *Jews* who thought themselves so peculiarly the People of God, and so immediately under his Government, that they ought not in Conscience to acknowledge the Government of another Nation, especially of a Person of another Religion; nor therefore pay Tribute to the *Roman* Emperor; which would be naturally construed an Acknowledgment of his Authority and Government: And from his Zeal for Religion and Reformation, they hoped to find him of this Party. But he perceived their Craftiness, and lets them know it, saying, *Why tempt ye me?* Ver. 23. Therefore, without directly answering the ensnaring Question, he draws them on, by Concessions out of their own Mouth, to acknowledge their present Duty, both with respect to God, and the Government God's Providence had placed over them. First, he requires them to *shew him a Penny*, a small Silver *Roman* Coin; then asks, *Whose Image and Superscription hath it? They answered and said*, Cesar's. *He saith unto them, Render therefore unto* Cesar *the things which be* Cesar's, *and unto God the things which be God's.* This was a sufficient Intimation of his own Judgment, That *Cesar*, as their supreme Governor, had a right to Tribute, and that they were obliged to pay it: For it was a constructive Acknowledgment that *Cesar* was their supreme Governor at that time, because their Money was stamped with his Image, and bore his Superscription; for these were Marks of the Chief Magistracy, and Prerogatives peculiar

liar to it. Upon this Suppoſition, without ſetting them to perplex themſelves and others with all the Niceties of *Ceſar*'s Title, he ſhews them what was their plain Duty to *Ceſar*, now it was evident God had brought them under his Dominion; remembring ſtill, that God had his Rights, as well as *Ceſar*: and what they were concerned in, with reſpect to both, was, to give to each their reſpective Dues.

In ſpeaking to theſe Words, I ſhall briefly do theſe following things.

I. Conſider what our Saviour here ſuppoſes, That God and the Civil Magiſtrate have each their Rights, which we are obliged to anſwer.

II. Shew that we are obliged to anſwer them wherever they are ſufficiently diſcover'd.

III. Accommodate theſe Obſervations to the Occaſion of this Day's Aſſembly.

I. I am to conſider what our Saviour ſuppoſes, That God and the Civil Magiſtrate have each their Rights, which we are obliged to anſwer. Our Saviour might well ſuppoſe this as a Truth. For,

In the firſt place, Nothing can be plainer with reſpect to God, and his Rights to the higheſt Honour and Reverence, the moſt ready, conſtant, and extenſive Obedience. God is in himſelf a Being of infinite Perfection: It is *he who made the Heavens, the Earth, and all things that are therein.* With reſpect to ourſelves in particular, *he is the Father of the Spirits of all Fleſh, and hath formed the Spirit of Man within him.* It is *he who preſerveth all things by the Word of his Power*, who *upholdeth our Souls in Life*, who is the *Author of every good and perfect Gift*,

*Gift*, of all the Happineſs we have ever enjoy'd, and of all the Happineſs we can ever expect, either in this World, or another. He is our ſupreme Lord and Governor, *King of kings, and Lord of lords*. In him therefore all Rights, and Titles to Obedience are united; who is our Benefactor and Patron; our Maſter, Father, and King; our Redeemer, and our Maker.

2. With reſpect to the Civil Magiſtrate, the high Ends of his Inſtitution, and the many Benefits proceeding from it to publick Society, ſhew he muſt have his Rights too. For beſides the natural Inclination whereby Men deſire the Advantages of Social Life, there is an Order *expreſly* or *tacitly* agreed upon, concerning the Manner of their Union in Social Life together: And thereby the Chief Magiſtracy is inveſted ever with a Power of directing the Actions of the Community, in ſuch way as ſhall moſt tend to the publick Safety, Peace, and Happineſs. This is as the Soul of the Body Politick, by which it is animated, held together, and employ'd in ſuch Actions as the publick Good requires. So that wherever the Chief Magiſtracy is placed in every Community, there is a Power veſted in it to direct the Actions of the ſeveral Members of it; which Directions they are under Obligations to obey. The Right of the Magiſtrate to Obedience in theſe Acts of Government, muſt be the ſame as his Right to Government itſelf; and Men ſubject to Government, are held to anſwer this Right upon as high Obligations at leaſt, as they are to anſwer the Duties of any other Relation they ſtand in to each other. So that this *Civil Relation*, once eſtabliſh'd, induces a *Moral Obligation*. The Rights of Princes, and the Obedience of Subjects, become Engagements of Conſcience; in part, as the Duty of all Relations is bound upon Men by the Law

of

of Reason and Nature, which is the Law of God; and further, as the Order, Peace, and Happiness of Society, with the Means necessary to procure and preserve them, that is, the Institution and just Rights of Governours, is the *Will* and *Intention* of God himself; who is a God of Order, and must certainly *will* the Peace and Social Welfare of Mankind. St. *Paul* therefore justly argues our Obedience to the higher Powers upon this Principle, *That they are ordain'd of God*, *Rom.* xiii. 1. And therefore every one who *resisteth the Power*, and just Rights belonging to it, *resisteth*, in so doing, *the Ordinance of God*. But this brings me,

II. To shew that we are obliged to answer these Rights wherever they are sufficiently discover'd.

It is true, these Rights which we are obliged to answer, must be sufficiently manifested. Here usually the greatest Difficulty of the Question lies. For it may sometimes happen, that the Right of requiring Obedience in some Cases may not be clear and evident; in others it may be clear and evident that a Claim of Obedience is without any Right at all. I would therefore, as far as may serve our present Purpose, endeavour briefly to settle this Point, and shew you, how the Rights both of God and *Cesar* are sufficiently manifested. And,

1. *Wherever the Will of God is sufficiently made known, there, his Right to Obedience is indisputably clear.* For every Signification of God's Will has the Force of a Law, and is to be receiv'd by all as the Command of the King of the whole Earth. So that what is manifestly discovered by the Light of Reason and the Voice of Nature, is the Will of God, the Author of Nature; and is to be receiv'd

ceiv'd as such by all his Creatures: So also is every Declaration of his reveal'd Will in his Word. In a more especial manner, when the Dictates of Reason and Law of Nature are explained and inforc'd by the positive Revelation of his Will, there is all the Evidence Men can in any way receive, that God challenges Obedience to them as his Right, which they are under the highest Obligation to answer.

2. *The Rights of the Civil Magistrate are there sufficiently manifested, when he requires what he has a Power vested in him to require, and makes known his Will in that way wherein the publick Will is to be declared.* To understand this let it be observed,

(1). What the Civil Magistrate requires *must be nothing contrary to the superior Will of God, or to that peculiar Prerogative God has reserved to himself over the Consciences of Men.* Such is the supreme Authority of God that no other can be equal, much less superior, to it. And if it shall ever happen that God and Man cannot be obey'd at the same time, the Case is very clear that we are to obey God rather than Man: And Conscience, as it is the inward Persuasion of a Man's own Mind, can only be subject to the Authority of such Declarations, as have, at the same time, the Evidence of certain Truth to persuade, and a competent Power to command. Hence it was a wise Observation of a celebrated Casuist * " That human " Laws meddle not with the Understanding, " that is to be governed as it can be persuaded, " and is therefore subject to the Empire of none " but God. "

(2.) *The Will of the Magistrate must also be signified according to the Constitution of the Government in that*

* Taylor, Ductor Dubitant. *lib.* 3. *c.* 1. §. 35.

*Wa*

*Way and Form of declaring the publick Will which is received and eſtabliſhed in the Community.* The Foundation and Reaſon of this is well expreſs'd by the Judicious Mr. *Hooker*, in whoſe Words I ſhall therefore repreſent it to you. † " At the firſt, when ſome " certain Kind of Regiment was once approved, " it may be that nothing was then further thought " upon for the Manner of Governing, but all per- " mitted unto their Wiſdom and Diſcretion, " which were to rule; till by Experience they " found this for all Parts very inconvenient, ſo " as the thing which they had deviſ'd for a Reme- " dy, did indeed but increaſe the Sore which it " ſhould have cur'd. They ſaw that to live by " one Man's Will, became the Cauſe of all Mens " Miſery. This conſtrain'd them to come unto " Laws, where Men might ſee their Duty before- " hand, and know the Penalties of tranſgreſſing " them." Upon this Foot, in moſt Caſes what are declared the Rights of Government by the publick Voice of the Law, are only to be underſtood as ſufficiently manifeſted: I ſay, *in moſt Caſes*; for it ſhould be here obſerved, there are ſome Duties ſo plainly evident, from the very Nature of Society, that the manifeſt Reaſon of the thing carries an Obligation with it. And upon this account it may be thought ſuperfluous for the Laws to declare any thing expreſly concerning them: Such as the general Care every good Man ſhould have for the Safety and Proſperity of the Commonwealth; that he ſhould be ready with his Eſtate, Fortune, and Life, for its Preſervation; and uſe all his Skill and Induſtry to promote and advance its Intereſts; which a great

† *Eccl. Pol. l.* 1. §. 10.

Author makes the first Principal of political Duties. *

(3.) *The Rights of the Civil Magistrate are then without all question sufficiently manifest, when what he requires, tends to promote the very End and Design of his Institution, and is regularly declared by the publick Voice of the Law.* In such Case no Objection can remain. If he has a Right to rule at all, to be obeyed in any thing, it must be sure in such things which are the proper Business and Intention of his Office, and where none can pretend Ignorance of his Will, or of his Authority to command. When God has made him his Minister for Good, and to execute Wrath upon him that doth Evil; sure he has a right to punish such Evil-doers, to restrain those Evils he was ordained to prevent, and to be obeyed, when he declares it to be his Will to do so. This must be the unquestioned Right of the Magistrate, and when thus signified must lay an Obligation in Duty and Conscience to answer it. But I proceed now to the

III. Third Thing proposed, to accommodate these Observations to the Occasion of this Day's Assembly: and from hence I think it may fully appear,

1. That the Cause of Reformation, in which you are engaged, is a Cause wherein the Rights of *God* and *Cesar* are concerned.

2. That the Manner, in which you are engaged in this Cause, is sufficiently manifested to be the Will both of God, and the Civil Magistrate. And,

* Erga totam Civitatem Officium boni Civis est, ut ejus salute et incolumitate nihil habeat carius; ut vitam, opes fortunasque suas ad eandem servandam libenter offerat; ut ad eandem illustrandam, ejusque commoda promovenda, omnes ingenii et industriæ nervos intendat. *Puffendorf De Officio Civis, l. 2. c. 18.*

3. That

3. That you are under Obligations of Duty and Conſcience to anſwer both; and the rather ſo, becauſe in this the Rights, both of God and the Government, are united.

1. *The Cauſe of Reformation in which you are engaged, is a Cauſe wherein the Rights of God and* Ceſar *are concerned.* It is the vertuous Deſign of your Societies, to put ſome ſtop to the bold and inſolent Immorality and Profaneneſs of the Age wherein we live; to prevent the Sin and miſchievous Conſequences of Drunkenneſs, Blaſphemy, profane Swearing, and Curſing, Profanation of the Lord's Day, and ſuch diſſolute, immoral, and diſorderly Practices. Theſe are great Diſorders with reſpect to God's moral Government of the World, highly tending to the Diſhonour of his Name, and reflecting upon his Authority. Theſe are Sins againſt the plaineſt Light of Nature, as well as the moſt expreſs Declarations of God's revealed Will: So that God has *every way* ſhewn his Diſpleaſure, and revealed his Wrath too againſt ſuch unrighteous Deeds. As *for theſe things*, Men are without any Shew or Pretence of Excuſe, *the Children of Diſobedience*; ſo *becauſe of theſe things cometh the Wrath of God upon them.* Eph. 5. 6. It is moſt certainly *the Will of God* that Men *ſhould deny ſuch Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts*, without which it is impoſſible they ſhould live either *ſoberly, or righteouſly, or godly.* Now if ſuch is *the Will* of God, is it not *his Right* to be obeyed therein? And are not all who own *this Right* of God, concerned to acknowledge it, by doing what in them lies to prevent ſuch Diſhonour to his Name? Are they conſtantly to pray *that the Name of God may be hallowed, that his Kingdom may come, and his Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*; and ſhall they be unconcerned at ſuch profane Swearing, and ſuch horrid Curſes, as vilify the Majeſty of God, profane the Blood of the

Covenant, and make even a Jeſt of the Damnation of Hell? Hath an unclean Perſon no Inheritance in the Kingdom of Chriſt and of God; and can they be unconcerned to ſee ſuch a Vice grow common, and impudent, as it is like to do, without Controul? Sure if they account themſelves engaged in any thing to ſtand up for God, it may be well expected they ſhould ſtand up for God againſt ſuch Sins, ſo diſhonourable to him, ſuch effectual Bars to all the Intentions of his Grace, and ſuch open Tranſgreſſions of the Laws of his Government. Can we forget theſe things whenever we conſider what we are to render to God?

And it is ſure *the Right of the Government* to prevent theſe Enormities, and one manifeſt End and intended Benefit of Government itſelf to do ſo. It was obſerved by our late King of glorious Memory, * **Nothing can prove a greater Diſhonour to a well-ordered Government where the Chriſtian Faith is profeſſed, nor is likely to provoke God to withdraw his Mercy and Bleſſings from us, and inſtead thereof to inflict heavy and ſevere Judgments upon this Kingdom, than the open and avowed practice of Vice, Immorality, and Profaneneſs.** It cannot indeed be long before a Government muſt feel the Effects of a general uncontrouled Corruption of Manners. When Drunkenneſs, Uncleanneſs, and profane Swearing have effectually debauched Mens Minds and ruined their Fortunes, both the uſual Conſequences of ſuch diſorderly Practices, what may not be feared from them; not only in the ſpreading Contagion of ſuch bad Examples, to the ruin of many others in their Eſtates and Credit,

* K. *William's* Proclamation for preventing and puniſhing Immorality and Profaneneſs.

their

their Bodies, and their Souls, but farther in all the Disorders of Robberies, Riots, and Rebellions? When profane Swearing shall have destroyed all Reverence for an Oath, what way may it make to Perjuries of the most dangerous Consequence, as to the Lives and Fortunes of private Men, so to the Quiet if not to the Hazard of the Crown itself? Sure then, the Government has a Right to interpose, to prevent or punish Practices of such Importance to its own Peace and Happiness, to its Honour and Safety. In this particular Case, the Government has interposed, and asserted this Right: It has declared it in many and repeated Acts of the whole Legislature. If then we are to render unto *Cesar* the things that be *Cesar's*, herein *his Right* is full, and *fully manifested*, to put a Stop to these Vices, a Restraint to these dangerous Evils.

2. *The Manner in which you are engaged in this Cause, is sufficiently manifested also to be the Will both of God and the Civil Magistrate.* As you are engaged in this vertuous Design, where you have the Cause of God and your Country in view; so you have wisely chosen a Way, in which it is the *Will of both* you should pursue it. The Way you have chosen, is by united Counsel, and mutual Assistance, to take care that the wholesome Laws of your Country, on this behalf provided, may be put in due execution. That Laws should be executed, is as necessary as that they should be made. It does not answer our Duty either to God, or our Country, that we personally our selves obey what they require, if we do not all that we wisely and prudently may, to prevent and give a Check to the Disobedience of others. It is a commendable Character of *a righteous Soul, to be grieved in seeing and hearing from day to day such*

*such unlawful Deeds.* 2 Pet. ii. 8. It is an Act of Love to God, and Charity to our Neighbour, in such Cases, to admonish and reprove them. It is then the *Will* of God: *Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy Heart: Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy Neighbour, and not suffer Sin upon him,* Levit. xix. 17. It is indeed the Admonition of the Wise Man, *He that reproveth a Scorner, getteth to himself Shame, Prov.* ix. 7. Such as deride Religion, and scoff at all good Admonitions, are lost to all the gentler Methods of Reproof, and it is in vain to try them. But will a Zeal for the Honour of God and the Interests of his Kingdom in the World, find out no *other Methods* where *these* fail, against outrageous Wickedness, and so put some Stop to its spreading? The same Wise Man has directed to another Method: *Judgments are prepared for Scorners, and Stripes for the Back of Fools,* Prov. xix. 29. In Cases where these Methods only can have effect and be of service, are they not as plainly within the Equity of the Rule, and the Intention of God, as the gentler Methods of Admonition and Reproof, where they are likely to prevail? Is it not then *the Will of God* that we should endeavour, as far as we prudently may, in *this Way,* to correct those Evils which other Remedies will not reach, and which yet the Honour of God, and the Cause of Religion, are so highly concern'd to have prevented.

As to the Civil Magistrate, how much it is his Will, appears, in that the Laws themselves have directed, and set out the Way in which you have chosen to proceed.

It is an undoubted Presumption, when Laws were made, they were intended to be executed: And it cannot be a severer Reflection on a Government,

vernment, than to say of it, It has the best Laws the worst executed of any Nation in the World. This must shew the last Degeneracy, when things are come to that pass which the *Roman* Historian complain'd of, That they can neither bear their Vices, nor endure a Remedy for them *. But it does further appear, that these Laws in particular, the Execution of which it is your Design to promote, were intended to be put in full execution; and that the proper Assistance of all Persons therein, is both requir'd and expected.

Since there is *such Encouragement given for Informations, such Penalties on them who shall omit their Duty in the Execution of them, and such Protection given to all Persons in doing, or causing to be done, any thing in pursuance of them:* It has therefore been thought necessary to enforce the Execution of them by several Proclamations; in the last of which our present King thus expresses himself: 6 & 7 Gul. 3.

**We do strictly charge and command all our Judges, Mayors, Sheriffs, Justices of the Peace, and all other our Officers and Ministers Ecclesiastical and Civil**; (after all which follows) **and other our Subjects whom it may concern, to be very vigilant and strict in the Discovery, and the effectual Prosecution and Punishment of all Persons who shall be guilty, &c.**

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* Labente deinde paulatim Disciplina, velut desidentes primo mores sequatur animo, deinde ut magis magisq; lapsi sint tum ire cæperint præcipites, donec ad hæc Tempora, quibus nec vitia nostra nec *remedia* pati possumus, perventum est. *Livius in Præfat.*

This

This Proclamation, for its Importance, order'd to be read at the respective Assizes and Quarter-Sessions, and four times a Year in every Church and Chappel, is a direct Description of the Method you take to serve your Country, of the Way wherein you have chosen to carry on so good a Design.

3. I come now to consider, That you are under Obligations to answer these Rights of God and *Cesar*; and the rather so, because here the Rights of both are united.

Each of these Rights have their separate Obligation: Not to give to *Cesar* the things that be *Cesar's*, is Disloyalty, and an higher Injustice than not to answer the private Rights of any particular Person, † inasmuch as it is Injustice to the whole Community, and to every particular Person in it: For every Right which every Man has, and all the Happiness of Social Life, depends upon the Protection of the Government, and orderly Execution of the Laws: It is contrary to that Faith and Allegiance we owe to our Prince, and to which we are bound by solemn Oath; for that certainly respects the Rights of his Government, as well as of his Person.

And not to give to *God* the things that *be God's*, is Impiety and Irreligion, an Act of yet *higher Injustice*, as the Right of God to all Obedience from us is founded in our very Beings, is extensive as all the Blessings we can hope for

† Illa autem sapientia quam principem dixi, rerum est divinarum atq; humanarum Scientia, in qua continetur, Deorum & Hominum Communitas, & Societas inter ipsos. Ea si maxima est, ut certe, necesse est quod a Communitate ducatur Officium, id esse maximum. *Cicero de Offic. l.* 1. §. 43.

as

as Men, or expect as Christians, and is derived from a Concurrence of every Title. How great must the Obligation then be, when both these Rights are united; when the Laws of God and our Country call for the same Acts of Obedience from us; and that too, in what so nearly concerns the Moral Government of God in the World, the Interests of the Kingdom of Grace, and the common Peace and Prosperity of the whole Nation? Here is no room to cool our Zeal with *Gamaliel's* Observation, *Refrain from these Men, and let them alone, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God*, Acts v. 38, 39. It may discourage an active Prosecution of human Laws, when Men can *find no Occasion* against those they punish, *concerning the Kingdom*, and would never find any, except *they found it against them concerning the Law of their God*, Dan. vi. 4, 5. as was the case of *Daniel*. In *such Case*, to be an *Informer*, or active Prosecutor, may expose Men both to *Reproach* and *Danger*. But *here*, you are assur'd, the Evils you endeavour to restrain, are as injurious to God, and as displeasing to him, as they are destructive of Peace, Order, and all good Government among Men. Here is not the least occasion to doubt the *Justice* of your Cause, or the *Prudence* of that Method in which you manage it: All Considerations concur to animate your Zeal. Go on to shew the Regard you have to the great Apostolical Precepts, how truly you *fear God*, how much you *honour the King*.

Now, upon the whole of this Argument, it may appear, I hope,

In the first place, *That your Societies are abundantly vindicated in what they have generously undertaken*

*dertaken for the Honour of God, and Good of Mankind.*

Sorry I am there ſhould be any occaſion to ſpeak in your *Vindication:* But as Honourable as your Cauſe is, as much as all Men, who are not by their Vices Enemies to the Reformation you promote, are obliged to encourage and aſſiſt you; I yet fear you meet with ſome *Diſcouragement*, not to ſay *Reproach, where, in all reaſon, it ſhould not be expected.* What may be the *true Reaſons*, I ſhall not enquire; it is ſufficient, they cannot be *good Ones.* It is your Deſign to promote Religion and Vertue, to prevent the open Progreſs of the moſt miſchievous Vices. *So far, I hope, is well enough.* This you endeavour in the Way the Laws themſelves have preſcrib'd, and the Wiſdom of the Legiſlature has found out for it. *In that too I hope there is no Harm.* What then is the Matter? *You meddle, it ſeems, without Authority and Commiſſion.* Strange! that a particular Commiſſion ſhould be neceſſary for *Chriſtians* and *Subjects* to *fear God* and *honour the King*; to wiſh well to the Intereſts of Religion, and the Peace of Mankind, and to uſe their beſt Endeavours to promote them. It is neceſſary indeed ſome Perſons be eſpecially appointed, whoſe Buſineſs it ſhould be to attend this Work. The Miniſters of God have it therefore in Charge to *warn Men* of theſe Sins, *to exhort and rebuke with all Authority.* The inferiour Magiſtrates have a ſpecial Truſt repos'd in them, with all Faithfulneſs, Impartiality, and Diligence, to ſee theſe Laws executed. But theſe are *peculiar Obligations ſuperadded* to the general Obligations of Men and Chriſtians. They have the Diſhonour of their Character, the Breach of their Truſt,

and

and all the Miſchiefs the neglect of their Duty may occaſion, to anſwer for, *over and above* the Breach of that general Duty all owe to God and the King.

Yet ſure theſe Rights of God and *Ceſar* are not reſtrain'd to Miniſters and Magiſtrates. It is manifeſtly the Will of both, that *all Men* ſhould, as far as they reaſonably may, promote their plain and juſt Rights, and therefore put ſome Stop to thoſe Vices, they both require ſhould be reſtrain'd.

I am aſham'd to mention, as an Objection, *That you offer your ſelves willingly to this Service.* Sure Men muſt be very hard put to it, to find out Objections, when it ſhall be ſuppos'd a Fault in Men, that they are *willing* to do Good. If your Conduct is reproached with *falſe Accuſations*, and ſuch, as far as I could ever find, are what your Enemies lay to your Charge; ſo may the beſt Deſigns in the world be uſed, ſo they too often have been. In ſuch Caſe, Innocence is a full Vindication, and common Juſtice requires no Man ſhould receive or ſpread an evil Report of another, till it ſhall be prov'd; that he ſhould reject, with a vertuous Reſentment, every ſuch Report that has been diſprov'd. Indeed, no Men, much leſs numbers of Men, are free from all *Miſtakes*, or therefore from all Acts of Imprudence: All that Men can do, and with which therefore, ſure, every one ſhould be ſatisfy'd, is, to uſe ſuch regular and prudent Care as you have preſcrib'd to your ſelves; to act by calm and deliberate Counſel; to diſcountenance all Raſhneſs, and effectually remedy every Miſtake that comes to your knowledge.

What can further remain for your full Vindication, but what is in your own hands to do; to

ſhew, by the exact Regularity of your *own Manners*, your Zeal for the *Reformation of others*, is ſincere and upright? By a conſtant exerciſe of thoſe Vertues your ſelves, which you endeavour to promote in others; by an eſpecial Care of Vertue and Religion in your own Families, you muſt finally put your Enemies to ſilence. It will then manifeſtly appear to all unprejudic'd Perſons, your Zeal in this Cauſe is the effect of the beſt Principles, religious Fear of God, and a generous Love to Mankind.

2. *As you are hereby vindicated, you are alſo encouraged and exhorted to proceed.* To ſtand firmly to the Cauſe of God, and the Intereſts of your Country; this is ſure a Cauſe too glorious to be forſaken: And what Diſcouragements, what Difficulties ſoever you meet with, cannot be ſuch, as will warrant you at once to give up the Rights of God and *Ceſar*. Think with your ſelves, if the Difficulties are too great that lie in the Way to an End ſo neceſſary, notwithſtanding your mutual Counſel and Help; the Time you give to it from your own Affairs, and the great Charge you generouſly ſupport, to defeat the common Arts of obſtinate Wickedneſs, in perverting Judgment, and to render all Laws ineffectual; what muſt be the fatal Conſequence if you ſhould lay aſide your Care! Think with yourſelves, if things are now ſo bad with us, how much worſe they muſt be, when there is no Check, no Controul; when you ſhall yield the Victory to Vice, when it ſhall have born down all Oppoſition, and none are left to ſtand againſt it. Good Minds will be affected ſure with ſuch a miſerable State of their Country. But you ſhould alſo conſider how near this may bring the Danger to your own *Families*, and the Perſons for whoſe

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Preſervation you are moſt *affectionately concerned*. The beſt hope you have for the Preſervation of ſuch as are *yet Innocent*, is from the vigorous proſecution of your Deſign to leſſen the numerous Temptations that will otherwiſe lie in their Way. Conſider you have the Laws of your Country on your Side, you are engaged in the Cauſe of God, and have all Reaſon to expect his Bleſſing and powerful Aſſiſtance. The Event indeed is in his hands: But the Conſcience of performing your Duty to him, which way ſoever the Event ſhall be, and of aiming ſincerely at his Glory and the general Good of Mankind, will at preſent afford you the higheſt and nobleſt Pleaſure; and aſſure you, however you miſs your reward from Men, you ſhall receive a full and ample Reward at the Hands of God.

3. To conclude; Theſe Conſiderations ſhould ſhew all Perſons who wiſh well to your Cauſe, how much they are concerned to encourage and aſſiſt you to the utmoſt of their Power. I hope all ſuch Perſons will think they are under ſome Obligation to anſwer the united Rights of God and *Ceſar*, and where they are ſo fully manifeſted that no room is left to doubt of them. I do not ſay, that every one is under an Obligation to promote this Cauſe in one and the ſame way. A great deal is certainly left to our own Prudence, as to the manner of it: but I hope I may now be allow'd to ſay, That every one is under an Obligation to promote this Cauſe in ſome way or other, and that in Prudence they ſhould do ſo in ſuch way as is moſt likely to ſucceed. The Method you have engaged in has the Advantage of mature Deliberation to form it, and of Experience to ripen and perfect it. It is eaſy to ſee no private Attempts of Reformation can be

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so extensive, or so effectually executed, as where Mens Counsels and Actions are united in Society: Where Men then have either the Cause of God, or the Prosperity of their Country at heart, are they not directed to wish well to your Undertaking, as they desire the Success of your Cause? If they sincerely do so, can less be expected of them, than their good Word, their Prayers to recommend your Cause to the Blessing of God, and to justify your Conduct against the unreasonable Reproaches of Men? And if this be reasonable, sure something more may be reasonable too; that they who can benefit you by their Counsel, or assist you by their Presence, should do so; that they who cannot with Convenience to their private Affairs afford their Time, should yet assist in supporting your Charge, which is too great to remain always a Burden upon a few. May God awaken a more general Concern for his own Interest, and send down more universally into Mens Hearts a publick Spirit, and unfeigned Zeal for the publick Good. May He so bless your Endeavours, and He can do it, that we may all rejoyce in the Success of them. May we live to see the happy Times, *when Judgment shall so dwell* in these Lands, *and Righteousness remain among us; that the Word of Righteousness may be Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness Quietness and Assurance for ever*, Isa. xxxii. 16, 17. which God of his infinite Mercy grant.

FINIS.